

Special Report

COVER STORIES

Now the Great Debate

Moscow was tough, but the Senate won't be easy

The normally restrained Cyrus Vance allowed himself a small half-smile as he faced a packed, steamy White House press room last week. He knew that he was about to make one of the most important announcements of the Carter Administration. But it had been so long in coming that instead of elation and high drama, the final declaration was something of an anticlimax. Reading from a prepared text, the Secretary of State said simply that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. "have concluded our negotiations on SALT."

What these few words meant was that after more than six years of frustrating bargaining, Washington and Moscow were finally ready to sign the Strategic Arms Limitation treaty known as SALT II. That night, at a Democratic congressional dinner in Washington, Jimmy Carter said that "a SALT treaty will lessen the danger of nuclear destruction, while safeguarding our military security in a more stable, predictable and peaceful world." The treaty will be signed by Carter and Soviet Communist Party Chief Leonid Brezhnev when they meet in Vienna, June 15 through 18, for their first summit conference.

The time it has taken to negotiate the new accord indicates the sensitivity and complexity of arms control. At stake is the national security of the U.S. and the Soviet Union. SALT is not a disarmament treaty, and there are large elements of military force that it does not cover at all.

What it does seek to do is maintain a strategic balance that deters nuclear war by allowing each superpower a force that could suffer a surprise atomic strike and still be capable of launching a devastating, unacceptably destructive counterattack. Eventually the SALT process is supposed to enable both sides to maintain the strategic balance at a lower level of armaments, but that still lies far in the future.

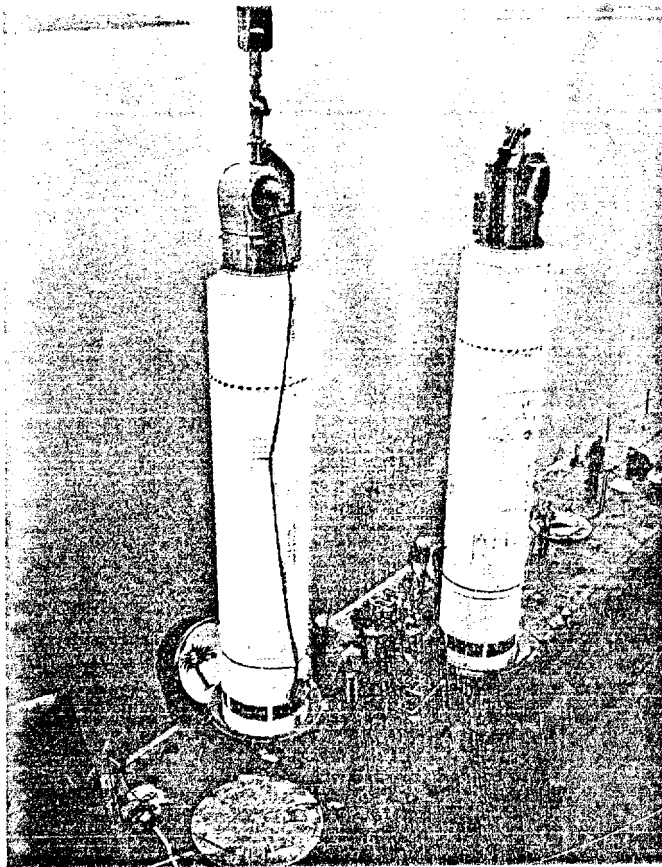
It is this basic notion of disarmament that gives the SALT process its fundamental popular appeal as a worthwhile enterprise. To date, however, the control efforts have not had much success. While the 1972 SALT I accord has halted deploy-

ment of an antimissile system, it only managed to freeze intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched missiles at existing high levels. The treaty ignored bombers and did not deal effectively with weapon modernization. Disappointed arms-control advo-

SALT's opponents, who believe the treaty concedes a perilous degree of Soviet superiority, are determined and well organized. They number almost one-quarter of the Senate, and need only one-third to block ratification and inflict a disastrous defeat on Carter's presidency.

The SALT II agreement announced by Vance is still only a working document. U.S. and Soviet negotiators in Geneva will resolve a few technical differences and prepare the final formal wording. The SALT II draft is 76 pages. It contains a preamble, treaty, protocol, statement of principles and several appendices. The treaty itself, which will run until the end of 1985, generally follows the outline set in 1974 at Vladivostok by Brezhnev and Gerald Ford and imposes equal numerical limits on the two strategic arsenals. Using weapon launchers as the basis for measuring these arsenals (it would be almost impossible to identify each warhead accurately), the treaty will limit each side to a combined total of 2,250 ICBM launchers, long-range bombers and submarine tubes capable of firing strategic ballistic missiles by the start of 1982. This actually is below the ceiling of 2,400 launchers set by the Vladivostok summit. Despite long arguments, the treaty will not limit the Soviet Backfire bomber, because Washington reluctantly accepts Moscow's contention that the new warplane, which is in production, is not being deployed in a manner that would enable it to attack the U.S.

Under the overall ceiling of 2,250, SALT II places a subceiling of 1,320 on those weapons regarded as the most destabilizing to the strategic balance (see chart following page). These mainly are the multiwarheads known as MIRVs, the acronym for multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles. By enabling several weapons to be fired from a single launcher, MIRVing has led to the rapid expansion of atomic arsenals even though the number of launchers was frozen by SALT I. The 1,320 subceiling covers not only ICBMs and submarine tubes, but also long-range bombers fitted to carry cruise missiles, the highly accu-

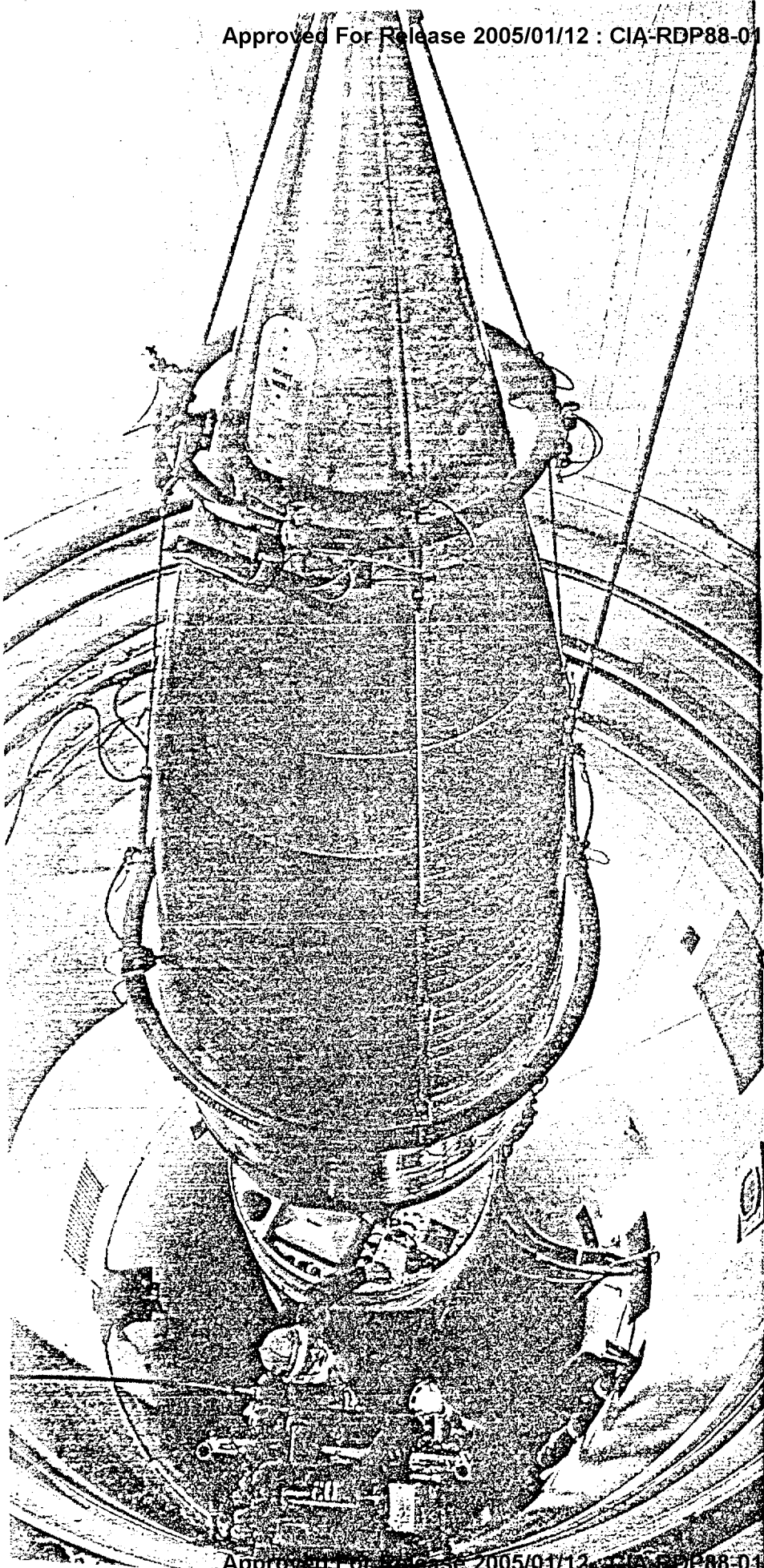


U.S. submarine at Charleston being armed with Poseidon missiles

Not a disarmament treaty but an effort to maintain the balance.

ates hoped that subsequent agreements would slash superpower nuclear stockpiles. The achievements of last week's accord remain relatively modest, but they do go beyond SALT I. For the first time, a few aging nuclear weapons actually will have to be dismantled, and some technology will be restricted.

More important, perhaps, the new treaty establishes a psychological climate for better relations between Moscow and Washington. That, in any case, is the view of the Administration and its supporters, but they also face a great deal of opposition and a fierce battle in the Senate for ratification. The fight will be fierce because



rate drones that the U.S. is still testing.

Some types of MIRVs face special restrictions. For example, MIRVed ICBMs and submarine-launched missiles together cannot exceed 1,200. And under that ceiling, MIRVed ICBMs are limited to 820. The reason for this stricter limit is that the land-based ICBMs, by combining enormous thrust with deadly accuracy, pose an especially great threat to the U.S.-Soviet balance. Neither side, moreover, can test or deploy an ICBM armed with more than ten MIRVs or a submarine-launched missile with more than 14 MIRVs. To prevent several missiles from being fired from the same launcher, the treaty forbids testing of rapid reloading techniques or the storing of extra missiles near launchers.

In addition to limiting the numbers of strategic arms, SALT II places restrictions on missile size. Both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. are prohibited from developing new land-based ICBMs larger than the Soviet SS-19. Since only the Soviets already have larger rockets (mainly the SS-18), and they will be allowed to keep them, the new limit in effect confirms Moscow's monopoly of giant missiles. But the U.S.S.R. cannot add to the 308 huge launchers now deployed.

To slow the introduction of new strategic weapons, each side will be permitted to test and deploy only one new land-based ICBM. A missile must be counted as new if there is a 5% increase or decrease in some of its key characteristics, such as length, payload and launch weight. The U.S. is expected to concentrate its effort on developing the MX missile, which probably will have a mobile launcher. Carter is under pressure to okay development of this system and is expected to make his decision soon.

To ensure that both sides comply with the treaty, Moscow and Washington will depend heavily on space satellites and electronic monitoring. They therefore agree not to interfere with each other's use of satellite photography and electronic devices. Specifically banned is the encoding of radio transmissions (telemetry) beamed from missiles to ground stations during tests, if that information is related to verification of the SALT terms.

The protocol part of SALT II is in force only until the end of 1981 and deals primarily with new systems. During the protocol period, there is a ban on testing or deploying (but not developing) mobile ICBMs like the MX. Although no restrictions (in addition to those in the treaty) are placed on cruise missiles launched from airplanes, there can be no deployment of ground- or sea-launched cruise missiles with a range exceeding 372 miles. These weapons, however, can be developed and test-fired.











The final integral part of SALT II is the statement of principles. In it, the two countries set guidelines for SALT III and pledge to begin it "promptly" after the SALT II agreement takes effect.



THE RIVAL MISSILES

Minuteman III: the most advanced U.S. ICBM, currently armed with three MIRVs, each capable of delivering a 335-kiloton force. This is more than 16 times greater than the "Little Boy" A-bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

SS-18: the most powerful Soviet ICBM, currently armed with up to ten MIRVs, each capable of delivering a 1,000-kiloton force.

Missiles drawn to scale

CURRENT U.S. STRATEGIC ARSENAL	WHAT SALT II ALLOWS	CURRENT SOVIET STRATEGIC ARSENAL
 2,060	2,250 maximum All Strategic Nuclear Delivery Systems	 2,570
 1,046	1,320 maximum All types of MIRVs	 795
 1,046	1,200 maximum MIRVed SLBMs* and ICBMs	 725
 550	820 maximum MIRVed ICBMs	 600
 0	Frozen at existing levels Modern heavy MIRVed ICBMs (such as SS-18)	 308

CURRENT U.S. CONVENTIONAL FORCES	WHAT SALT II IGNORES	CURRENT SOVIET CONVENTIONAL FORCES
 <p>Uniformed personnel 2,026,345</p> <p>Tactical aircraft 5,364</p> <p>Field artillery 5,500</p> <p>Tanks 12,100</p> <p>Aircraft carriers 13</p> <p>Cruisers/destroyers/ 81</p> <p>Attack submarines 81</p>		 <p>Uniformed personnel 4,400,000</p> <p>Tactical aircraft 8,000</p> <p>Field artillery 20,000</p> <p>Tanks 50,000</p> <p>Aircraft carriers 2</p> <p>Cruisers/destroyers/frigates</p> <p>Attack submarines</p>

Who Conceded What to Whom

How Carter and Co. negotiated the strategic arms treaty

Last week's announcement of agreement on a SALT II treaty between the U.S. and the Soviet Union capped 6½ years of negotiations. Jimmy Carter and Leonid Brezhnev hope that when they sign the treaty next month, they will be keeping alive a process that began with SALT I a dozen years ago and will continue—in SALT III, IV and V—for decades to come. The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks have been called the most important negotiations of the postwar era. But whether SALT II ever becomes the law of the land, indeed whether the SALT process is to continue, depends on the U.S. Senate, which must ratify the treaty by a two-thirds ma-

majority. The debate in the Senate over ratification will cover a range of questions, including one of history: Who conceded what to whom in exchange for what in the course of the negotiations? Attention has already begun to focus on the confused but climactic phase of SALT II, from the beginning of the Carter presidency until last week's announcement. Believing that one way to grasp SALT is to understand its evolution, TIME Diplomatic Correspondent Strobe Talbott has spent much of the past year reconstructing the Administration's conduct of SALT, based on exclusive interviews with key officials. His report:

Jimmy Carter had just been elected President, and the Kremlin was nervous. After eight years of dealing productively with Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, the Soviets found themselves confronted in January 1977 with a largely unknown quantity. Would this new American Administration finish the work on a Strategic Arms Limitation treaty begun by Nixon and continued by Ford? The SALT I interim agreement limiting strategic offensive arms, signed by Nixon and Brezhnev in 1972, was due to expire in October 1977. Brezhnev and Ford had agreed at Vladivostok in 1974 on the framework of a new treaty to run until 1985: each side would be allowed 2,400 strategic, or intercontinental-range, weapons, 1,320 of which could have MIRVs. In January 1976, Brezhnev and Henry Kissinger had nearly reached an understanding on how to fit into the Vladivostok framework two new weapons, the Soviet Backfire bomber and the U.S. cruise missile, which had not been defined at Vladivostok. But by then détente, SALT and Kissinger himself had come under attack from presidential candidates in both parties, including Democratic Dark Horse Jimmy Carter.

After the Inauguration, Carter ordered the National Security Council to prepare for renewed strategic arms talks between Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. The NSC drafted Presidential Review Memorandum No. 2, an interagency study of the options available to the President. There was a loose consensus that the U.S. should seal the deal Gerald Ford had made at Vladivostok, and swiftly. Then the Administration could get on with more ambitious initiatives in the next round of talks, SALT III.

However, Defense Secretary Harold Brown, National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, his deputy, David Aaron, and Carter himself were all dissatisfied with the Vladivostok accord. Its sub-

ing of 1,320 multiple-warhead launchers allowed the two sides "freedom to mix" land-based and submarine-launched MIRVed missiles. The Soviets could concentrate their MIRV force on land, where their delivery systems were most powerful and accurate. Soviet land-based missiles, or ICBMs, fall into "heavy" and "light" categories. The 1972 SALT I agreement left the Russians with more than 300 heavies, much bigger than anything the U.S. has or, under the interim agreement, would be allowed to have. The remainder of the Soviet ICBM force is made up of many rockets classified as light, but still bigger than the mainstay of the U.S. deterrent, the Minuteman ICBM.

American strategists have long feared that the land-based Soviet rocket force, with its core of Hydraheaded heavy monster missiles, might some day be able to destroy all 1,000 Minutemen in a preemptive strike. Brown and Aaron were tantalized by the idea of using SALT II to restrain the MIRVing of Soviet ICBMs in

drafted by his right-hand man for strategic affairs, Richard Perle. "If further negotiations were to begin where the Ford-Kissinger negotiations left off," the memo concluded, "you would unnecessarily assume the burden of past mistakes."

Carter and his top advisers wanted, if possible, a Strategic Arms Limitation treaty that would be acceptable both to the Kremlin and to the junior Senator from Washington. Moreover, the new President's men were eager to do more than just finish Henry Kissinger's work for him. On a loftier plane, the Carter inner circle had an idealistic commitment to "real arms control"—measures to halt the arms race rather than merely establish rules for competition—and they felt that in the post-Inaugural honeymoon they had a unique opportunity to move boldly in that direction.

In early March, Brzezinski chaired a meeting of the Cabinet-level Special Coordination Committee in the windowless Situation Room in the basement of the

The issue of verification would become the grand obsession

general and to reduce the number of heavy rockets in particular.

There was also a compelling political imperative for seeking to lower the Vladivostok ceilings. Congressional critics had been warning for some time that they might oppose ratification of any treaty that left the Vladivostok ceilings in place. The leading critic, Senator Henry Jackson, had breakfast with Carter at the White House two weeks after the Inauguration and argued that SALT II must come to grips with the twin problems of Soviet heavy missiles and Soviet land-based MIRVs. Afterward Jackson sent the President a detailed, 22-page memo

White House. David Aaron suggested that the U.S. negotiating position include a proposal for an equal limit on the number of MIRVed ICBMs that both sides could deploy, plus a drastic reduction in the number of Soviet heavy missiles already deployed. The plan would have rolled back some Soviet programs and slowed down others, while leaving the American arsenal intact, although it would have been coupled with an offer to sacrifice some American weapons still on the drawing board. As Aaron later put it, "We would be giving up future draft choices in exchange for cuts in their starting line-up." Brown seconded the idea, adding that

Special Report

there might also be a limit on the number of missile tests each side could conduct in a year. Such a limit would further inhibit the Russians from improving their rockets.

Two days later, a Saturday, Brzezinski, Brown, Vance and Aaron met in the

Cabinet Room with Carter, Vice President Walter Mondale and Paul Warnke, who had just been confirmed as chief SALT negotiator. The President reiterated his preference for a position far beyond the Vladivostok accord. Brown explained the idea he and Aaron had discussed earlier. Carter nodded vigorously and said, "Good. Let's do that." Warnke did not oppose the ambitious proposals, but cautioned: "If they're shot down by the Soviets, we'll be criticized for retreating."

Brzezinski then directed NSC Staffer William Hyland, a veteran Government Sovietologist and former close aide to Kissinger, to draft negotiating instructions for Vance. Hyland produced what became known as "the comprehensive proposal." It would have held Soviet MIRVed ICBMs to 550, a level equal to the number of MIRVed ICBMs on the American side, cut the Soviet heavy force in half, from about 300 to 150, and allowed the U.S. to deploy all forms of cruise missiles with ranges up to 2,500 km (1,550 miles)—a much higher range limit than the Soviets had said they would accept.

At an NSC meeting in mid-March, Vance suggested that if the Soviets rejected the comprehensive proposal, the U.S. should be prepared instead to ratify the Vladivostok ceilings immediately and defer to SALT III the resolution of the Backfire bomber and cruise missile as well as deep reductions in the ceilings. Carter approved, as long as the Soviets understood that the comprehensive proposal was the "preferred" U.S. position. The deliberations over the comprehensive proposal were so secret that even the top layer of the bureaucracy was largely ignorant of what had happened until the eve of Vance's departure for Moscow.

When, just before leaving, Vance gave Soviet Ambassador Anatoli Dobrynin a briefing on the proposal, Dobrynin commented pointedly that it seemed to have little to do with the Vladivostok accord, which the Soviet leadership was determined to enshrine in a new treaty. In Moscow, during a chilly "we

importance of consummating the Vladivostok accord as a precondition to further arms-control measures. Then, at the first business meeting, Gromyko hinted in his opening statement—before the Americans had even formally presented their proposal—that his government knew what was coming and would reject it.

Despite these warning signals, the U.S. team expected the Russians at least to respond with a counterproposal. Vance had come to Moscow with top-secret "fallback" instructions for a compromise. These were hidden even from members of his own entourage. When some middle-level officials arrived early at the U.S. embassy for a briefing on their side's negotiating

position, they found William Hyland at work with a pair of scissors, clipping out the fallback instructions before showing the document to the rest of the party. That evening at the VIP guesthouse in Lenin Hills, there was much grumbling about how "Hyland got caught shredding our orders."

Vance was never able to use his fallback instructions. Instead of making a counteroffer, the Soviets curtly, categorically rejected both the U.S. comprehensive proposal and the "Vladivostok deferral" alternative—the first because it would have sharply cut existing Soviet programs while leaving U.S. forces unscathed; the second because it deferred the issue of the cruise missile, which the Soviets wanted to constrain right away.

zinski and Warnke. The permanent U.S. SALT delegation in Geneva (led when Warnke was in Washington by his deputy, Ralph Earle) renewed biweekly "plenaries" with the Soviet negotiators. The press was rarely told anything.

The Soviets in Geneva never even hinted at the Kremlin's resentment of the Carter human rights policy, and the Americans were equally careful not to echo their Government's criticism of Soviet human rights abuses. Unaware of this rule, a newcomer to the U.S. team brought up the dissidents in an informal tête-à-tête with his Russian opposite number. When he reported the exchange later in a "memcon," his superiors told him never again to mix business with displeasure.

Back in Washington during the spring of 1977, there was an intensive round of SALT-salvaging brainstorming sessions within the U.S. Government. One of the most important was a 2½-hour meeting between the State Department arms control director, Leslie Gelb, and the NSC's William Hyland over lunch. Hyland drew several columns on his paper napkin. He and Gelb then divided the tangle of SALT issues into three categories: 1) those that could be couched in terms of the Vladivostok accord; 2) interim measures that would allay Soviet concern over the cruise missile and U.S. concern about the upgrading of Russian ICBMs; and 3) goals for future, more ambitious agreements.

The sketch on Hyland's napkin became the basis for a three-tier proposal: a treaty to run till 1985, a three-year protocol, and a statement of principles for SALT III. Gromyko accepted that framework when he next met Vance in Geneva in May. Gromyko also agreed in principle to lower the Vladivostok ceiling from 2,400 total strategic launchers during the life of the SALT II treaty. But the meeting left open the knotty questions

"Giving up future draft choices for a cut in their starting lineup"

In a press conference at the U.S. ambassador's residence, Vance announced that his mission had failed. Carter and Brzezinski publicly defended the proposals back in Washington. No sooner was Vance airborne than Gromyko gave a press conference too, accusing the U.S. of a "cheap and shady maneuver" aimed at achieving "unilateral advantage." As a stunned Cy Vance headed home, SALT II seemed to have degenerated into an intercontinental shouting match.

After the Moscow debacle, both sides set about quietly picking up the pieces. In early April, Dobrynin's limousine

of which weapons would be dealt with in each tier—and how the U.S. could be sure the Soviets did not cheat. Before answers could be hammered out with the Russians, there had to be a united position within the U.S. Government.

It took nearly four months in mid-1977 for the Administration to settle on how to repackage past U.S. proposals in a way that would be negotiable when Gromyko and Vance met again. Somehow the Vladivostok subceiling of 1,320 multiple-warhead weapons, which the Russians considered sacrosanct, had to be preserved. Within that subceiling, a way had to be found to deal with the most dangerous component in the Soviet arsenal,

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Special Report

MIRVed land-based missiles. The Soviets had already served notice they would reject any new provision that singled out heavy missiles per se. In May, Vance had proposed, and Gromyko had brusquely rejected, a freeze on MIRVed heavies. Besides, Pentagon and CIA analysts had been

son: except for a telltale domed antenna, the MIRVed SS-19 silos were virtually identical to the unMIRVed SS-11 holes.

The U.S. SALT negotiators had been trying to get the Russians to accept a rule whereby once a given type of launcher had been tested with a MIRVed missile,

gaining. They decided to seek two new subceilings: 1,200 for a combined total of land-based and submarine-launched MIRVs, and 800 for land-based ones alone (i.e., MIRVed ICBMs).

The huddle went on into the early morning, with Aaron and Hyland assigned to hone the details. To make the idea of a new, lower MIRV maximum and an even more restrictive MIRVed ICBM subceiling palatable to the Kremlin, the U.S. coupled it with a partial concession to the longstanding Russian insistence that bombers armed with cruise missiles be counted in the Vladivostok limit on multiple-warhead launchers. The American scheme involved subtracting 1,200—the new MIRV missile total—from 1,320, the old Vladivostok MIRV missile total. That left 120, which would become an allowance for bombers on each side armed with cruise missiles. Any more than 120 would have to be at the price of one MIRVed missile given up for every cruise-missile carrier added.

The next day's meeting between Carter and Gromyko was promising but inconclusive. Carter spelled out the proposal for counting MIRVed ICBMs under a new subceiling. Gromyko indicated interest. Carter stressed, however, that the plan was contingent on Soviet acceptance of a strict retroactive counting rule for MIRVed launchers: D-and-P must count as fully MIRVed. On that score, Gromyko reverted to his familiar recalcitrance. But the meeting had gone well enough for Carter to say he would like to get to know Brezhnev personally at a summit. In heavily accented English, Gromyko replied, "I think there are chances."

The chances looked even brighter the next week when Gromyko, attending the U.N. General Assembly in New York City, notified Vance he wanted to see Carter again. He had received new instructions from the Kremlin. Brzezinski asked Hyland to forecast the Soviet response Gromyko would be bringing with him. Hyland's prediction: Gromyko would concede on D-and-P and

accept the American formula for counting MIRVed missiles, but would ask for slightly higher limits on the number of MIRVed ICBMs and on the combined maximum for land-based and submarine-launched MIRVed rockets. Hyland's recommendation: accept the Soviet numbers if they were within reasonable bounds.

When Gromyko arrived for his second meeting with Carter, the suspense in the White House was palpable. But it quickly gave way to relief. Brown, who

An issue: two ICBM fields with 180 underground silos

saying for some time that the Soviet SS-19 rocket, technically classified as a light launcher, was more accurate and therefore at least as threatening as its brutish big brother, the heavy SS-18.

Toward the end of the summer, the policymakers began looking for a way to build into the Vladivostok limit of 1,320 total MIRVed systems a new subceiling just for land-based MIRVs, both heavy and light. This was a crucial shift in negotiating tactics. It meant that the U.S. was finally giving up on cuts in the Soviet heavy force. But it also meant, if it were accepted, that the Russians would have less "freedom to mix" between land-based and submarine-launched MIRVs. Aaron and Hyland first sounded out the Soviets on the possibility of a MIRVed ICBM subceiling at a lunch in the Russian embassy in late August. The Russians were non-committal but seemed interested.

Such a subceiling would make it all the more important that the U.S. be confident its spy satellites could keep an accurate count as the Soviets MIRVed more and more of their ICBMs. The Administration knew that the fate of the treaty in the Senate would depend largely on whether the U.S. could monitor Soviet compliance with the various restrictions. The issue of verification had become the grand obsession of SALT II.

During the summer and early fall of 1977 there was a heated, secrecy-shrouded debate over how to verify the number of Russian MIRVed ICBMs. The debate went on at the negotiating table in Geneva and within the Carter Administration. At issue were two ICBM fields near the Ukrainian towns of Derazhnyia and Pervomaik. American officials dubbed both the towns and the issue "D-and-P." The two fields contained a total of 180 underground silos, or launchers. One-third of the silos housed SS-19 rockets with multiple warheads; the other two-thirds housed older, less formidable SS-11s with single warheads. By satellite reconnaissance, the U.S. had kept careful count as the Soviets installed the SS-19s into one-third of the D-and-P silos. Nonetheless, officials in Washington—and particularly at the Pentagon—were worried about their future ability to distinguish MIRVed from unMIRVed rockets, which would be together as they were at D-and-P. The rea-

all launchers of that type had to be counted as MIRVed, regardless of what kind of rocket they contained. Vance and Warnke felt it was more important for the Soviets to accept that rule for the future than it was to resolve the potential ambiguity that existed at D-and-P, especially since a similar ambiguity existed in a U.S. missile field at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana, where MIRVed and unMIRVed Minutemen were poised in indistinguishable silos.

But Harold Brown felt that any meaningful counting rule must apply retroactively to D-and-P. In other words, the Soviets would have to agree to count all the silos there under the U.S.-proposed subceiling for MIRVed ICBMs. Warnke and Brown got into a debate on the issue at a meeting of the Special Coordination Committee in August. Their disagreement was partly responsible for Vance's postponing his next scheduled session with Gromyko from early to late September. Finally the President sided with Brown.

When Gromyko arrived in Washington, he was wearing his most dour poker face. His first meeting with Vance was unproductive. The Secretary of State was deeply concerned that the talks were headed for another impasse and possible collapse. Vance took Gromyko into his mahogany paneled office with only their interpreters present and told Gromyko that he had better be more forthcoming with Carter the next day. If he was not, said Vance, there was

no point in going through with the audience. Only then did Gromyko's stone wall crack: the Soviet government might "respond favorably" to an American proposal for a MIRVed ICBM subceiling, he said.

A suddenly optimistic Vance called Harold Brown on the special, secure telephone line connecting the State Department with the Pentagon. The two men agreed to meet with President Carter the next day to plan for the next day's bar-



Vance urges Gromyko to be less rigid.

had picked up a smattering of Russian in earlier SALT negotiations, understood that Gromyko was delivering a positive response even before Interpreter Victor Sukhodrev began translating. Brzezinski, who has a good command of Russian, knew as soon as Gromyko began reading his statement that the answer, for a change, was *da*. Sensing from Brzezinski's and Brown's expressions that he was missing something important, Hamilton Jordan whispered to his neighbor, Hyland, to translate Gromyko. Mondale, meanwhile, was carefully studying Hyland's memo. It was as though the Vice President were getting ready to grade the paper on the basis of what Gromyko said.

he grade would have been an A.* Gromyko accepted the American position on D-and-P as well as the U.S. proposal for a lower total ceiling and for new limits within the 1,320 subceiling. Also, just as Hyland had predicted, Gromyko made a counterproposal with slightly higher numbers. But instead of accepting the Soviet figures, Jimmy Carter tried a bit of poker himself. Carter told Gromyko he welcomed the progress that had been achieved and expressed the hope that the remaining differences could be narrowed. (The Soviets ultimately got their way on the overall aggregate of 2,250 for total strategic systems, while the U.S. got its way on the MIRV aggregate of 1,200. The two sides compromised on 820 for the MIRVed ICBM sublimit.) At the end of the meeting, which both sides considered a major breakthrough, Carter showed Gromyko a plastic scale model of U.S. and Soviet ICBMs. The Russian behemoths, painted black, both outnumbered and dwarfed the graceful white Minutemen. "Now you see why it's so important to limit these things," said the President.

Another factor in the SALT equation, the Soviet Backfire bomber, also seemed within the realm of compromise. Gromy-

ko had picked up a smattering of Russian in earlier SALT negotiations, understood that Gromyko was delivering a positive response even before Interpreter Victor Sukhodrev began translating. Brzezinski, who has a good command of Russian, knew as soon as Gromyko began reading his statement that the answer, for a change, was *da*. Sensing from Brzezinski's and Brown's expressions that he was missing something important, Hamilton Jordan whispered to his neighbor, Hyland, to translate Gromyko. Mondale, meanwhile, was carefully studying Hyland's memo. It was as though the Vice President were getting ready to grade the paper on the basis of what Gromyko said.

old Brown to joke that the Soviets must have been signaling their willingness to let the Backfire issue drag on forever. The Soviet Foreign Minister left in his wake a swell of American optimism. One reason: shortly after Gromyko's visit, the Soviet negotiators in Geneva agreed to cancel altogether the development of the SS-16, a particularly worrisome missile because it would have been readily convertible into a mobile ICBM. Carter placed great importance on that concession. He told an audience in Des Moines that SALT II could be concluded "in a few weeks."

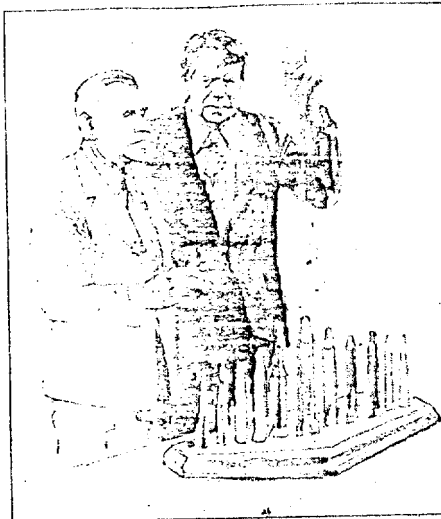
Even his more cautious advisers hoped out loud for "SALT by Christmas"—a phrase that would have a melancholy ring when it was echoed a full year later.

The winter of 1977-78 turned out to be a frigid one for the treaty talks. Congressional critics, led by Jackson, howled "betrayal" when they learned that the Administration had abandoned its pursuit of a subceiling exclusively for heavy missiles. The Russians, meanwhile, did little to improve the atmosphere of SALT. The KGB intensified its crackdown on dissidents, and the Soviet-backed Cuban legions stepped up their intervention in Africa. Meanwhile Christmas 1977 had come and gone. So had the October expiration of SALT I. Moscow and Washington promised to adhere to the old agreement until a new one could be reached.

The Carter Administration realized it

MIRVed superrocket, the "Missile-Experimental," or MX, off the drawing board and onto the launching pad. Moreover, the Russians wanted the ban on new ICBMs to contain an exemption so that they could proceed with a new single-warhead, solid-fuel missile to replace the aging, less reliable liquid-fuel SS-11 of D-and-P fame.

From early 1977 until mid-1978, the superpowers churned out a dizzying array of proposals and counterproposals on the same theme: the Soviets were trying to protect their new type of single-warhead ICBM while seeking to block development of the MX during the three years of the protocol that would accompany the treaty. The issue dominated the April 1978 Vance-Gromyko meeting in Moscow. Even the



Carter shows Gromyko models of ICBMs.

jokes at the negotiating table reflected the tension. A Vance aide picked up an electronic gavel and accidentally set off a clanging bell. Smiling broadly, Gromyko's normally humorless deputy, Georgi Kornienko, said, "Well, there goes Washington!" "Quick," added Dobrynin, "somebody call Zbig and tell him it was a mistake!"

inally, last May, Gromyko came to Washington with a bold new suggestion: the U.S.S.R. would give up its own new type if the U.S. would give up the MX until the treaty expired in 1985. This was significant—first because it would have done away with exemptions in the new-types ban; second because it elevated the ban from the protocol to the treaty; and third because it was extremely rare for the Soviets even to hint at sacrificing a weapon system that the Kremlin had apparently already promised the military.

However, the offer was unacceptable to the U.S. The reason: the Carter Administration was determined to preserve the option of developing the MX as a replacement for the increasingly vulnerable Minuteman. The U.S. was willing, however, to hold off deployment—but not development—of the MX until 1985 if the Soviets would refrain from deploying their single-warhead new type. *Nyet*, said the Russians: they wanted to kill the MX program, not merely impede it.

There was further progress in Geneva in July. Gromyko told Vance the Kremlin would agree to a ban in the treaty with an exemption for one new type of ICBM; each side would be free to choose either a MIRVed or a single-warhead ver-

ko had brought with him to Washington a draft letter from the Kremlin listing measures the Soviets would undertake to assure that the Backfire was not upgraded to a strategic weapon that could strike the U.S. American officials considered the assurances inadequate, but Gromyko and Vance agreed to relegate the Backfire letter to its own negotiating channel between Leslie Gelb and Alexander Bessmertnykh, one of Dobrynin's deputies. Bessmertnykh's name is derived from the Russian word for immortal, leading Har-

had underestimated the difficulty of the outstanding issues. One of the most troublesome, and certainly most important, involved a ban on new types of ICBMs. The bane of SALT has been that new weapons and the modernization of old weapons have had an insidious way of rendering arms-control agreements obsolete if not unequal. The Carter Administration, to its credit but also to its frustration, had been trying ever since the ill-fated proposal of March 1977 to use SALT II to slow the juggernaut of technology. The Soviets were receptive—but not for altogether idealistic reasons. They wanted a ban on new ICBMs that would prevent the U.S. from getting its

*It also would have been Hyland's final grade. He was about to resign from the Government to take a job helping his old boss. He wrote the memo in his memoirs.

Special Report

its MX replacement for Minuteman and the U.S.S.R. with its solid-fuel replacement for the SS-11. But Gromyko made his proposal conditional on American acceptance of the Soviet position on a variety of other unresolved issues. The U.S. was not about to concede on all those points, but Vance and his party flew home from Geneva with renewed encouragement: the "end game," or "trade-off

a B-52 with 20 cruise missiles and a 747 with 50 would count as two launchers, since 20 and 50 average out to 35 per plane. After relentless haggling, the Soviets inched up to 25 and the U.S. inched down to 30 as the base number.

In September, Gromyko came to Washington with an important concession on air-launched cruise missiles: the Soviets conditionally offered to drop their

SALT I from building anything as big and powerful as the SS-18 heavy rocket, it was politically important to the Carter Administration that SALT II allow the U.S. at least to match the SS-18 in number of warheads on the MX. That point would be critical when it came to selling the treaty on Capitol Hill.

As the negotiators zeroed in on an agreement, the policymakers tended to look more and more over their shoulders at Congress. The White House fired off a cable to Geneva ordering the U.S. delegation to insert an asterisk after the first reference to "treaty" in the Joint Draft Text that was being negotiated. The asterisk called attention to a footnote stipulating that the document, in its final form, might be an agreement for approval by a simple majority of both houses instead of a treaty requiring ratification by two-thirds of the Senate. The Soviets never took the asterisk terribly seriously. To them, it was a symbol of the basic capriciousness of American democracy.

Much more serious was another typographical feature of the Joint Draft Text. The U.S. and Soviet definitions of cruise missiles were set apart from each other, and from the mutually agreed treaty language, by brackets. Brackets signified disagreement. The Russians had long maintained that range limits on ground-launched and sea-launched cruise missiles in the protocol and restrictions on the number of air-launched versions per aircraft in the treaty should apply simply to "armed" cruise missiles; there should be no distinction between nuclear-armed cruise missiles and conventionally armed ones. The reason: it was extremely difficult for spy satellites and other "national technical means of verification" to distinguish between nuclear and conventional warheads on cruise missiles. Therefore on the same principle that the U.S. had made stick in the case of D-and-P, where unMIRVed launchers were "deemed" to be MIRVed for purposes of counting under SALT, all cruise missiles should be deemed to be nuclear-armed.

For once, the logic of the Soviet position was difficult to refute. The politics, however, was more complicated. Pentagon planners were uneasy with the prospect that SALT II—which was supposed to restrain strategic nuclear arms—might end up, willy-nilly, restricting the development and deployment of some conventionally armed tactical weapons as well. West European strategists and politicians were even more concerned. The West Germans, banned by international agreement from having nuclear weapons, were particularly anxious to have access some day to conventionally armed, ground-

The Russians wanted to kill the MX program, not merely impede it

phase" of SALT II had begun.

Part of the maddening dynamic of SALT is that the resolution of a general problem often confronts the negotiators with a MIRV-like cluster of specific problems of definition and detail. The ban on new types of ICBMs was a case in point. The tentative agreement on such a ban intensified the disagreement over what constituted a new type. The U.S. wanted to define a new type as any existing rocket tested with more warheads than before. This definition would force the Soviets to freeze the number of warheads on their three big MIRVed rockets; the SS-17 at four warheads, the SS-19 at six, the heavy SS-18 at ten. The U.S., for its part, would hold its one existing MIRVed missile, the Minuteman III, to three warheads.* At the same time, Washington wanted the option of eventually MIRVing its one new type, the MX, with ten warheads.

Nothing doing, said the Russians. They wanted to define new types in a way that would allow them to raise the SS-17 from four to six warheads and that would limit the U.S. to six warheads on the MX.

However, in Geneva last July, the Soviets ventured the most explicit linkage to date between two issues: Gromyko indicated that his government would accept a freeze on warheads at the number already tested on each existing type of ICBM if the U.S. accepted the longstanding Soviet position on another matter—the number of cruise missiles allowed on each of the special bombers the U.S. planned to develop. The Russians wanted a limit of 20 cruise missiles per plane. Under their formula, a B-52 with 20 cruise missiles would count as one launcher against the subceiling of 1,320; a modified Boeing 747 armed with 80 cruise missiles would count as four launchers. The U.S. wanted an "averaging approach" pegged to the number 35, so that taken together,

insistence on a 2,500-km limit on the range of air-launched cruise missiles. A month later Vance set off on his third visit to Moscow as Secretary of State, and his aides were billing the mission in advance as "the last mile," "the final round," "the climactic meeting." The seasonal motto "SALT by Christmas!" was again in the air, along the Potomac. But the Soviets do not believe in Christmas. At the negotiating table in the Kremlin, Gromyko told Vance that the Russians agreed to accept the U.S. "averaging approach" on limiting air-launched cruise missiles. But, Gromyko reminded his guest, earlier Soviet acceptance of a MIRV freeze on ICBMs had required American acceptance of a strict limit, rather than an averaging approach, on cruise missiles aboard bombers. Since the Russians were yielding to the U.S. on the averaging approach, Gromyko continued, their earlier concession on the MIRV freeze was no longer operative. Sighed a haggard American official, paraphrasing Lenin, "One step forward, one step backward."

Actually, there was at least a step and a half forward at that meeting. While the Soviets now claimed the option of MIRVing their existing types of ICBMs with up to ten re-entry vehicles—an unacceptable proliferation from the American standpoint—they did finally concede that the U.S. had the right to put ten warheads on the MX. Since the U.S. was barred by



*However, technically the U.S. would have had the right of MIRVing the Minuteman with seven warheads, since the missile had been tested with that number on two occasions during the Ford Administration.

Special Report

day buzz bombs. Throughout SALT II, NATO has had a vigilant, knowledgeable and highly influential watchdog in the U.S. Senate. Georgia Democrat Sam Nunn. He lobbied both Carter and Defense Secretary Brown to "protect" conventionally armed cruise missiles in SALT.

In 1977 the U.S. proposed a definition of cruise missiles that would contain a proviso: once the protocol expired, either side would have the right to deploy conventionally armed cruise missiles on airplanes other than heavy bombers without those planes counting against the 1,320 subceiling. Thus the precedent would be established that the treaty had no jurisdiction over conventional as opposed to nuclear weapons.

Vance, Warnke and Earle were never happy with this provision. All three men are attorneys, but they found the U.S. cruise missile definition too legalistic even for their lawyerly blood, and they privately sympathized with the Soviet view that it was essentially unverifiable. But they kept their misgivings away from the negotiating table, where they argued the case of their White House and Pentagon clients as best they could. The Russians, however, were adamant. "We see this as a pretext to gain unilateral advantage," said Chief Soviet Negotiator Vladimir Semyonov—and he said it repeatedly. "Each time we address this subject, we

are trying to find stronger words."

Two key arbiters on the American side turned out to be Brzezinski and Mondale. Originally they had been skeptical about the Pentagon position. Then they became concerned that it might some day be important to preserve the nuclear/conventional distinction if the West Europeans were going to support the treaty—and, more important, if Sam Nunn were going to vote for its ratification. Finally, last November, Brzezinski and Mondale re-

fire as a strategic weapon nor to demand restrictions on where it could be deployed. Instead, the Carter Administration had settled for restrictions on the number of planes that could be produced and for the right to build a comparable American bomber. Since it was almost impossible for either side to distinguish between different types of warheads on cruise missiles, Brown was ultimately swayed by the argument that the Soviets might some day arm Backfires with long-range nuclear-



assessed the matter again and now sided with Vance.

At the end of November, Vance, Brzezinski, Brown, Mondale, Carter and Jordan met at the White House to review SALT. They decided to back off the U.S. insistence on an explicit clause exempting conventionally armed cruise missiles. Brown decided not to hold out for the exemption partly because he had come to worry about what the Soviets might do with air-launched cruise missiles aboard the Backfire bomber. The U.S. had recently agreed neither to count the Back-

armed cruise missiles disguised as conventional ones and thus have a strategic nuclear weapon uncounted by SALT.

The U.S. softened its position on the definition of cruise missiles in hopes that the Soviets would reciprocate with concessions of their own on at least two other outstanding issues: the number of warheads per ICBM (the U.S. wanted a minimum on Soviet rockets) and the number of cruise missiles per aircraft (the U.S. wanted a maximum on its own bombers). Vance, Warnke and Marshall Shulman, Vance's adviser on Soviet affairs, stressed

Reducing the Horror

In March 1977 Cyrus Vance received his real initiation as Secretary of State when he carried to Moscow Jimmy Carter's "comprehensive package" for deep reductions in the Soviet and American strategic arsenals. The Kremlin leaders rejected that proposal bluntly. Over the next two years, Vance met with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko nine times, painstakingly searching out the compromises that finally led to last week's SALT II agreement. Sometimes Vance had only a day to shift gears from negotiating with Moshe Dayan on the future of the West Bank or Ian Smith on the future of Rhodesia to bargaining with Gromyko on SALT. In an interview with TIME's Strobe Talbott, Vance described the experience.

Keeping Up-To-Date on SALT: We've discussed the issues within the Government at least once every couple of weeks. Before setting off on a trip that will include SALT, I've made a point of zeroing in again on the subject. If I had 24 hours, I could sit down and reabsorb the necessary detail before going into the negotiations. Also, my 6½ years in the Defense Department were a real help. Picking up the technical aspects of SALT was not as difficult as if I'd had to start from scratch. Finally, as a trial lawyer, I've been trained to absorb a heavy dose of facts and retain them under considerable pressure.

Some of the meetings, of course, have been very difficult, very trying, very frustrating. But from time to time it's really been fun. The intellectual challenge of it is exciting, and when you finally get a breakthrough, it's really quite thrilling. SALT involves internal negotiations within each country as well as bilateral negotiations between the two countries. That aspect too is a fascinating intellectual exercise and a challenge. SALT also brings together the political, military and political diplo-

sions, and it involves the important interests of our allies. All that makes it more difficult, but also more exciting than other negotiations I've been involved in.

On the Frustrations of SALT: One of my real frustrations has been that it's taken us so long. The delay has inhibited us from laying out the strengths of our position and from answering misleading or false statements by those who oppose SALT. One result is that it's given an impetus to the anti-SALT movement that's going to take us a while to push back. It would have been a lot easier in some ways if we'd been able to lay it all out as we went along. But we've had to live with the realities of an ongoing negotiation; we've had to stay within the parameters of those negotiations. God knows, it's been frustrating for me when I've read some of these stories that are just plain untrue and I haven't been able to come out and say, "Here's what the actual facts are."

There's another matter that bothers me, and I don't know the answer to it. I'd hoped we could find a way of involving the Congress more in the negotiating process so that they would have a better understanding of what was going on and what we were trying to achieve. I really don't think it's worked out as satisfactorily as it might have. We just have to find a way to resolve this issue of dealing with Congress in the future, because it's in everybody's interest for the members of Congress to understand what we're trying to do and what our problems are. It's hard for them to understand if we can't share everything with them.

Lessons Learned from the Negotiations: First, we ought to give more thought in advance to what weapons systems we're going to need. We should not have to keep options open on systems that we don't really need. If you keep options open on systems that are never going to be used, then you've just com-

this linkage in a series of meetings with Dobrynin in December. The Soviet ambassador indicated that his government was prepared to make reciprocal concessions when Vance and Gromyko met in Geneva later that month.

That left some relatively minor problems—and one very big problem: Soviet encryption of missile telemetry. Telemetry is the remote electronic means by which a rocket or a warhead sends back to earth data about its performance during a test flight. One way the U.S. monitors Soviet compliance with SALT is to intercept and analyze Soviet telemetry. Last July the Russians transmitted in code—encrypted—the telemetry from an SS-18 test, including the telemetry about the performance of the warhead—data that are helpful to the U.S. in determining throw weight or payload. The incident assumed political importance, for it went to the heart of the American obsession with verification. Ohio Senator John Glenn, the former astronaut, had already staked out this as “his” issue, on which his vote for or against ratification would largely depend.

CIA Director Stansfield Turner took a hard line at a number of meetings of the Special Coordination Committee: SALT II should forbid the Russians to engage in any encryption whatsoever in their ICBM tests. Vance and Warnke felt Turner went too far. After all, they rea-

soned, SALT entitles the U.S. to some but not all information about Soviet missile tests. For instance, the number of warheads on a rocket and its payload or throw weight would be governed by SALT II, but not the nature of the guidance system. Therefore encryption should be constrained but not banned altogether.

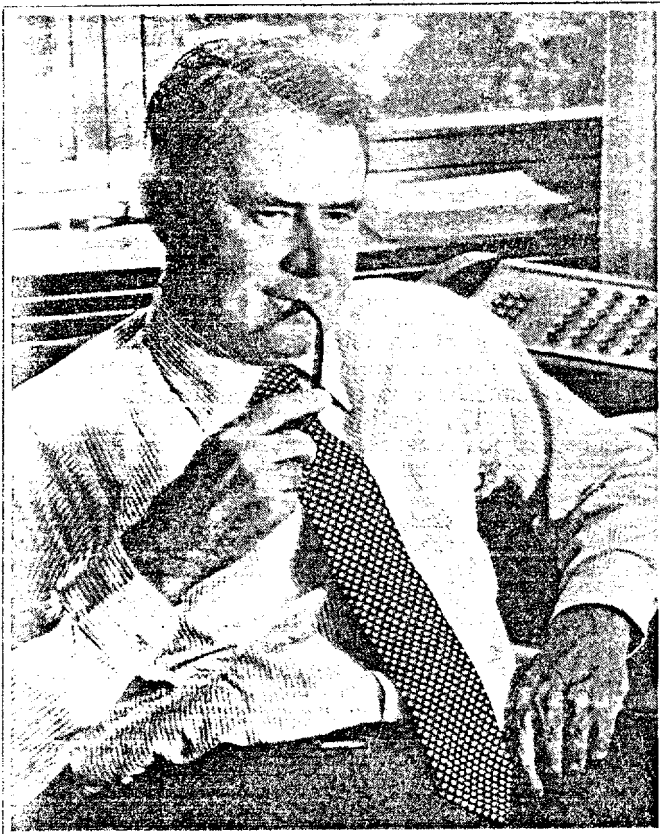
The President came down in favor of a modified restriction on encryption. The practice should be considered a violation of SALT “whenever it impedes” verification. (U.S. intelligence usually knows what information is contained on various channels of telemetry and which channels it must have access to for purposes of verifying compliance—and therefore which channels must not be encrypted, or transmitted in code.) Warnke and Earle were instructed to raise the issue with Semyonov in Geneva. Semyonov complained that the U.S. was trying to use SALT for purposes of espionage rather than verification. Just before Vance was due to meet with Gromyko in Moscow last October, Warnke and Earle raised the issue with Semyonov again: a common understanding accompanying the treaty must spell out that some telemetry is relevant to some provisions of SALT, and therefore encryption of that telemetry would constitute a “deliberate concealment measure.” Without such a provision, said Warnke sternly, the treaty could not be properly verified; moreover it could not—indeed, should not—be ratified. “I’m

prepared to be criticized,” said the much criticized Warnke, who had announced that he was resigning from his post and returning to private law practice, “but I’m not prepared to be ridiculed.” This time Semyonov conceded the point.

But an extraordinary thing happened in Moscow a few days later when Vance arrived to negotiate with Gromyko: Semyonov was repudiated by his bosses. Gromyko stuck to the Soviet refusal to include even a limited ban on encryption in SALT. Over lunch, he said in English, “On this question I am like a stone wall.” Kornienko said acidly that Semyonov “didn’t understand our position.” Vance and his colleagues could only hope that the Soviets were holding out on the issue for bargaining leverage.

When Vance returned to Europe in late December for his ninth meeting with Gromyko on SALT, the suspense was heightened by Carter’s surprise announcement less than a week before of the opening of diplomatic relations with China. Now that the famed China card was finally on the table, would the Soviets up the ante in SALT? Brzezinski said absolutely not. Vance and some of his advisers were not so sure.

The first two days of the negotiations were marked by a stiffening of the Soviet position on some minor issues but by major progress on some more important ones. Gromyko dredged up an



Cyrus Vance in his personal office at the State Department

pllicated the negotiating process unnecessarily. I think this is an important lesson for the future—for SALT III. Second. I think there is a need for greater input in the way of arms-control considerations into the planning of military force structures. As we come to see our security interests best advanced by a stable and lower-level military balance, we will learn to integrate more effectively arms-control and force-structure planning as complementary rather than opposing elements in our defense planning.

On Dealing with the Soviets: We’ve learned that informal, exploratory and very private discussions are an essential part of the negotiating process. Without that kind of discussion, you just can’t make the progress you want. You have to be able to sit down and talk very directly, essentially with nobody else around. That way the other side will open up and tell you, “Well now, this is what our problem is.” It allows you to understand their problems and to see if there might be ways to take account of those considerations and still achieve your own objective. That’s why it’s of critical importance that you have this kind of channel. We found we just couldn’t be as open with the press and the public as we’d originally hoped.

Why SALT Should Be Ratified: First, because it enhances the security of the U.S. and our allies. Second, it will help maintain strategic stability; it will reduce uncertainties with respect to the force structures of the two sides and thus enable each to plan forces in a more intelligent, less destabilizing way. Third, the treaty is based on adequate verification—not on trust. Fourth—and this is what I’d like to emphasize—we should never lose sight of the awesome horror of nuclear weapons and the incredible effects of a nuclear exchange. Anything that makes those horrors less likely is of fundamental importance to us, to the Soviets and to the whole world.

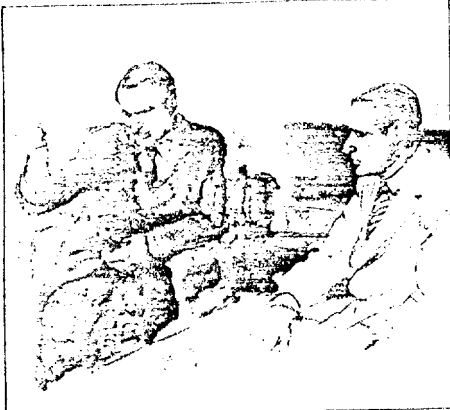
Special Report

old complaint: protective shelters for workmen hardening Minuteman silos at Malmstrom made it impossible for Soviet satellites to distinguish the MIRVs from the non-MIRVs, so the U.S.S.R. might have to insist on treating Malmstrom as an American D-and-P after all. Gromyko also raised for the first time with Vance a number of unresolved issues that had previously been considered secondary and had been dealt with exclusively by the permanent delegations, most notably cruise missiles. The Russians wanted, among other things, a ban on multiple-warhead cruise missiles—an exotic drone that the Pentagon had no intention of deploying during the treaty period but wanted to be free to test.

The most serious sticking point during the first two days of the talks concerned how much smaller the Soviets could make a modified version of an existing type of ICBM without that modification being classified as the one "new type" that each side was to be allowed under the treaty. In April 1978 the U.S. had proposed a limit of plus or minus 5% on any change in the length of the rocket booster, the diameter, the weight of the rocket at launch and the throw weight of an existing type of ICBM. The U.S. proposed some additional parameters as well. The Russians wanted a shorter list, but in May they indicated they would accept plus or minus 5% as the bounds of permissible change within whatever parameters were finally agreed upon.

However, two weeks before Vance met Gromyko in Geneva, the Soviet delegation took a big step backward: the Kremlin would still accept an upper limit of 5%, but now it wanted no limit at all on "downsizing." Gromyko improved slightly on that position, offering to settle for plus 5%, minus 20%. Vance replied that the U.S. would hold firm to a lower limit of 5%. At issue was whether the Soviets would be free to proceed with one or more new, smaller, more fuel-efficient, more accurate ICBMs under the guise that they were merely modified versions of old ICBMs. The U.S. felt that a 20% limit on downsizing would constitute an unacceptable loophole in SALT II; it would make a mockery out of the claim that the treaty banned all but one new type on either side. Gromyko's apparent willingness to compromise made the American negotiators hopeful that the Soviets would eventually return to their original acceptance of the U.S. position.

One reason for their confidence: on



Karpov and Earle at loggerheads.

the major unsettled issues, Gromyko seemed to be under instructions to make concessions. The Soviets accepted, once and for all, a freeze on the number of warheads on existing ICBMs at the number already tested, and reaffirmed that the U.S. had the right to put ten warheads on the MX. The two sides further narrowed their difference on the average number of cruise missiles per bomber.

There was also considerable progress on the "common understanding" to govern encryption of telemetry. Vance and Gromyko worked out a compromise stipulating that any method of transmitting telemetry, "including its encryption," would be banned "whenever it impedes" verification—but that any method that did not impede would be permitted. Vance cited the encrypted telemetry of the SS-18 test in July as an example of what the U.S. would consider itself entitled to monitor under SALT II. Gromyko replied that the common understanding on encryption would be adequate to cover any case that might arise. But because Gromyko had not contradicted him, Vance felt the Soviet's response was satisfactory.

Stansfield Turner, Harold Brown and Zbigniew Brzezinski, however, did not agree. They were following the negotiations closely in Washington. During a

Carter in Plains, Ga., to get his approval, then cabled the new negotiating instructions to Vance.

Vance, who received the cable on his third day in Geneva, was furious. He telephoned Brzezinski from the U.S. SALT headquarters, protesting that it would be pointless and provocative to try to pin down Gromyko any further on the issue of the July test. After checking with Brown, Turner and Carter again, Brzezinski called Vance back to tell him the order stood. Brzezinski's call caught up with Vance when he was already at the Soviet mission, beginning a private session with Gromyko. Because they were talking on a Soviet phone, with the Russians very likely listening in, the Secretary of State and the National Security Adviser referred only to "that matter we discussed earlier." The President, said Brzezinski, considered it "critical for ratification" that Vance elicit a satisfactory response from Gromyko.

Vance did as he was told, and Gromyko's response was testy and ambiguous. The Foreign Minister then had an unpleasant surprise for Vance: the Kremlin would not proceed with summit plans until all outstanding issues had been resolved, including the provision for multiple-warhead cruise missiles and other sticking points that the U.S. had previously considered too minor to delay a signing at a mid-January Carter-Brezhnev summit, to which the Soviets had already tentatively agreed. Soviet diplomats indicated in private conversation that their government was unhappy about the timing of Deng Xiaoping's (Teng Hsiao-p'ing) forthcoming visit to Washington in

"On this question," Gromyko said in English, "I am like a stone wall."

meeting in Brzezinski's White House office the evening after the second day of the Vance-Gromyko talks, Turner objected strenuously to the compromise wording of the common understanding; he did not like the fact that it explicitly permitted encryption under some circumstances. All three men felt that the common understanding left the Soviets with too much latitude to decide for themselves when they could encrypt and to what extent. It might even allow them to claim that in actual practice encryption never impeded verification and therefore was never forbidden. Brzezinski suggested that Vance should go back to Gromyko again on the July test, this time stating bluntly that the U.S. would consider a repetition of the encryption used in that test as a violation of SALT. Gromyko should be told that if the Soviet government disputed that position, he must speak now, or risk the loss of peace. Brzezinski telephoned President

late January. They did not like the idea of Brezhnev preceding Deng and very likely being eclipsed by him. Therefore Gromyko might have been using these eleventh-hour wrangles over third-rate issues as a pretext to postpone the Carter-Brezhnev summit.

Vance came home exhausted, just in time for Christmas with his family—another Christmas without SALT. Ralph Earle and the permanent negotiators based in Geneva were ordered to go back to work until they resolved the remaining problems. Earle raised the July SS-18 test, plus the similar one that had taken place in December, with the newly promoted Soviet chief negotiator, Victor Karpov, who had taken Vladimir Semyonov's place. Karpov first seemed to acquiesce in the American position that a repetition of the encryption used in either of those tests after SALT II was in force would be a violation of the treaty. Then, in February, he told Earle he was under instruc-

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Special Report

tion to state that the Kremlin considered the agreed common understanding on encryption adequate to cover any case that might arise, and "no further interpretation was necessary." Nor was there progress on the equally vital issue of downsizing. Karpov held out stubbornly for the 20% limit that the U.S. considered an unacceptable loophole. Meanwhile, Vance and Dobrynin were conducting intensive negotiations in Washington. But the diminutive figure of Deng Xiaoping cast a long, dark shadow over even the "back channel" of SALT.

In mid-February the U.S. offered a compromise to break the deadlock. Vance told Dobrynin that the U.S. would agree to ban the testing of multiple-warhead cruise missiles if the Soviets would return to their original acceptance of plus or minus 5% as the permissible change in the size and weight of an existing ICBM. For two weeks Moscow blared complaints about American policy—particularly policy toward China—in public while emitting no positive signals through the back channel. American officials began to fear that the Kremlin might be fundamentally reassessing whether it wanted to conclude a SALT II treaty with the Carter Administration after all. Then, during the week of Feb. 26, Dobrynin delivered an encouraging message to Vance: the Kremlin would accept a 10% to 12% limit on the downsizing of ICBMs. Vance held out for 5%, but the Soviets were moving in the right direction. The Secretary of State took Dobrynin to see Carter in the Oval Office. The President told the ambassador that despite disagreements over Indochina, Afghanistan, Iran and other trouble spots, the U.S. and the Soviet Union must salvage SALT and improve bilateral relations. A few days later, in a surprisingly moderate speech, Brezhnev said he agreed.

The final weeks of the negotiations were among the most secretive and suspenseful of the past two years. Vance and Dobrynin were meeting regularly now, sometimes every few days, usually in Vance's hideaway study behind his formal office on the seventh floor of the State Department. On the problem of encryption, the Administration sought to do in writing, in the form of a letter from Carter to Brezhnev, what Vance and Earle had tried to do orally in exchanges with Gromyko and Karpov. The letter set forth the American contention that a repetition of the encryption used in the July SS-18 test and in a similar test in December

would be a violation of SALT II. The Carter letter elicited a quarrelsome Brezhnev response, also in writing: while not categorically rejecting the U.S. position, the Soviets objected to the citation of specific tests as examples of impermissible encryption; they challenged the U.S. to spell out exactly what it was about those tests that impeded verification. That was

The diminutive figure of Deng cast a long, dark shadow

something the American side did not want to do because the more it told the Kremlin about what it knew of those tests and what it needed for verification, the more it revealed about the workings of American intelligence. Brezhnev's testy response also accused the U.S. of seeking eventual prohibition of all telemetry.

Such was not the American intent. Rather, the U.S. wanted the Soviets to acknowledge that some telemetry is relevant to SALT and therefore that some encryption should be forbidden. References to the July and December tests were intended only as illustrations of the general principle. So the NSC decided to try again with a second Carter letter to Brezhnev, this time concentrating on a restatement of the general principle that some telemetry is necessary for verification. Largely at the urging of Brown, this second Carter letter was accompanied

by a note, which Vance was instructed to give to Dobrynin, reiterating the U.S. position on the two 1978 SS-18 tests. The combination of the letter and the note worked. Dobrynin, at a meeting with Vance in early April, stated that the issue had been "resolved on the basis of these exchanges."

At that same meeting Dobrynin also accepted, once and for all, 5% as the limit on the in-

crease or decrease in the length, diameter, launch weight and throw weight of an existing type of missile (this was a shorter list of parameters than the U.S. had originally sought). Nor could there be a change in the fuel type of an existing rocket, the number of stages, the maximum number of warheads or the minimum weight of individual warheads. These last two provisions were meant to prevent the Soviets from developing an SS-18 with a capacity to launch as many as 40 smaller warheads—four times as many as the ten-MIRV maximum

for the SS-18 stipulated by the treaty.

But the Carter Administration felt it needed an additional rule to assure that the Soviets would not cheat on the warhead freeze. The rule would govern how many warhead-dispensing maneuvers the top stage of the missile could engage in as it re-entered the atmosphere. In December 1978, the Soviets had twice tested the

SS-18 with its full complement of ten warheads but with two feints—or "release simulations"—as well. Pentagon and Senate skeptics suspected that the Russians might be developing an SS-18 with a capacity to carry more warheads than allowed. The Soviets, however, claimed that the feints were merely intended to make it easier for the warheads to penetrate antiballistic missile defenses. To complicate matters, the U.S. had tested decoys of its own, and the Navy had designed the Trident I submarine-based missile to engage in almost exactly the sort of feints that the SS-18 had demonstrated. In the end, the U.S. negotiators insisted that release simulations above the maximum number of warheads allowed on a given type of missile would have to be distinguishable from the procedure used to dispense MIRVs. In other words, no more tests like the ones in December. Two weeks ago, Dobrynin told Vance that the Kremlin agreed.

That left Vance and Dobrynin faced with only a pair of mostly symbolic problems involving the American Minuteman ICBM: a loophole in the warhead freeze that would have left the U.S. free to increase the Minuteman's MIRV load from three to seven, and the lingering Soviet complaint about the protective shelters over the Minuteman silos at Malmstrom Air Force Base, which the Soviets claimed blinded their spy satellites. Vance and Dobrynin might have announced an agreement two weeks ago. But the Soviets were not yet ready to commit themselves to a time and date for the Carter-Brezhnev summit, and the Administration wanted to enhance the impact by making both announcements in the same week. So the two negotiators drew out their final round over three meetings. At their last meeting on Monday, Vance told Dobrynin the U.S. was willing to relinquish the option of seven warheads on the Minuteman—an option the Pentagon had no intention of exercising anyway. Shortly afterward, Vance telephoned Harold Brown and asked him to order the Air Force to remove the shelters at Malmstrom. Soon after that, the two Secretaries met at the White House to announce the agreement.



Vance phones Harold Brown as talks end.

Special Report

"To Educate Their Senators"

Pro and con SALT lobbyists are focusing on a score of undecided votes



Vance, with Brown, announces treaty at the White House

Reaching agreement with the Soviets has scarcely ended the Administration's SALT negotiations. Now the bargaining shifts to Capitol Hill, where the Senate must be persuaded to approve the accord. Obtaining the required two-thirds vote may be the toughest political challenge the Carter White House has faced. Indeed it could be the most difficult foreign policy debate in Washington since the Senate rejected the League of Nations in 1920.

Although the score is certain to change once the legislators come under the full fire of the Administration's offensive, SALT II would be in deep trouble if a vote were held now. In sharp contrast to the 88-to-2 majority by which SALT I sailed through the Senate in 1972, today only 40 Senators appear to be enthusiastically behind the new treaty. Another ten will almost certainly back it though they say that they are still undecided. Definitely opposing the pact are some 20 hard-liners, such as Barry Goldwater, Henry Jackson and Jesse Helms, who distrust just about any arms deal with the Soviets. Joining these hawks probably will be about ten Senators now leaning away from the accord. A few doves, such as Oregon's Mark O'Hart and Wisconsin's William Proxmire, are also inclined to vote against the treaty; they view

it as a sham because it fails almost completely to reduce existing arsenals.

SALT's fate is going to depend on the Senate's remaining 20 or so members, who are genuinely undecided. Perhaps the two most important members of this swing group are the Senate's top party officials. Majority Leader Robert Byrd has carefully avoided committing himself. Said he: "I'll sit down and go over the treaty line by line and word by word." Active opposition by Byrd would probably doom the pact. Not so undecided is Minority Leader Howard Baker, whose backing last year was invaluable in the White House's successful drive for passage of the Panama Canal treaties. He told Carter last week that because of "serious misgivings about this treaty," he now tends to oppose it. Still, he has left himself some room to change his mind. Also uncertain of how he will vote is Georgia Democrat Sam Nunn, who is regarded as one of the Senate's leading authorities on military issues. His voice is sure to sway some of his colleagues.

Coming on the eve of the 1980 presidential election campaign, the treaty will be formally submitted to the Senate in early July. The SALT struggle will be a major part of Jimmy Carter's ability as a national leader. Even now his personal prestige could hardly be more completely

on the line. He phoned Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger last week, offering them extensive private briefings on the accord. (So far, none of these Republican notables has offered to join the pro-treaty drive.) On the morning that the U.S.-Soviet agreement was announced, Carter was up at dawn to sign letters to all 100 Senators, assuring them that SALT II will reduce the danger of nuclear war. He intends to speak out frequently for the treaty and lobby Senators at a series of White House dinners.

Presidential Assistant Hamilton Jordan and other White House staffers have been developing a SALT-selling strategy for almost a year, and its detailed plans fill three black loose-leaf binders. Potential SALT supporters around the country have been identified and categorized by the staff of Presidential Assistant Anne Wexler. There are, for example, some 7,000 editorial writers who are to receive information kits. There are business and educational groups that will be mobilized, particularly ones that have a special interest in improved U.S.-Soviet relations. Said Wexler of her vast network of contacts: "They are ready to educate their Senators. If [White House Congressional Liaison] Frank Moore says he needs 50 Arizona businessmen to lean on Senator DeConcini, I'll be able to produce them." Meanwhile, Vice President Walter Mondale, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Defense Secretary Harold Brown and other Cabinet members will take to the hustings across the country to promote the pact.

In the Senate, Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Frank Church will be the floor manager for the treaty and "resolution of ratification," the parliamentary instrument by which the chamber consents to the accord. But the principal SALT-seller is likely to be California's Alan Cranston, the majority whip, although he claims that he has not yet totally made up his mind on how he will vote. He began preparing for the fight last year, when he organized an informal study group of about 20 Senators who basically support arms control, though some have doubts about the new treaty. Most members are Democrats, such as Ohio's John Glenn, Colorado's Gary Hart and Iowa's John Culver. The only G.O.P. regulars are Maryland's Charles Mathias Jr., Rhode Island's John Chafee and Vermont's Robert Stafford.

The group has been meeting almost every other Tuesday in Cranston's large Capitol office, and already has been briefed by Vance, Brown, National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, CIA Director Stansfield Turner and technical

Special Report



Henry Jackson, Democrat of Washington
From what I know of the SALT II treaty, it is substantially unequal and unverifiable. It favors the Soviets. In its present form, it is not in the security interest of the U.S.

experts from the Pentagon and CIA. Several of the group's members will be playing crucial roles in the Senate debate. Culver and Hart, for instance, sit on the Armed Services Committee, which will hold hearings on the pact. And Glenn will be looked to by many of his colleagues for guidance on the question of whether the U.S. will be able to verify Soviet compliance with the treaty. So far, he has grave doubts.

SALT's backers do not claim that the accord achieves miracles. Instead, they emphasize that it simply is the best that can now be negotiated with the Soviets. Brown told TIME: "You have to compare this treaty not with some ideal treaty, but with what would happen if there were no treaty. SALT II will help our national security by limiting the Soviets to levels below those they could achieve if there were no treaty." One startling example: without SALT's limit of ten MIRVs per SS-18 ICBM, the Soviets would be able to mount up to 40 warheads on these monster missiles. This would give Moscow an advantage of thousands of warheads and almost certainly tilt the strategic balance in its favor.

Most experts agree with the Administration that the strategic arsenals of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. are at the moment in "essential equivalence." Although the Soviets lead in some areas, such as in the number of ICBMs and the size and power of missiles, the U.S. is ahead in bombers, the number of atomic warheads, weapon accuracy and certain other aspects.

The U.S. side of this balance, argue SALT's advocates, will not be affected by the treaty. The overall ceiling of 2,250 nuclear delivery systems, for example, is actually 190 greater than the nation now deploys. The Soviets, however, will have to scrap about 320 systems. While they probably will do this by decommissioning aging ICBMs and perhaps some bombers, these are still devastatingly lethal weapons that would

have continued to be aimed at the U.S.

By limiting each side to one new type of ICBM, SALT II slightly brakes what has been the rapid pace of Soviet missile development. Again, this places no hardship on the U.S. The Pentagon will be able to develop and deploy the MX mobile missile, carrying six to eight MIRVs. As for the air-launched cruise missile, a highly accurate weapon that could become a major component of the U.S. nuclear deterrent, it is almost totally unaffected by SALT II. The only limit on the cruise is that planes carrying it are to be heavy bombers counted toward the MIRV sub-limit of 1,320.

The Administration will emphasize that SALT II will save money. Brown estimates that over the next decade, the treaty will enable the Pentagon to spend about \$30 billion less for strategic weapons than would be required without negotiated arms limits.

Former Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright, now a Washington lawyer, sees SALT encouraging "a measure of mutual trust between the superpowers and as a precedent for cooperation on other issues." Although the Soviets very much want the SALT II agreement, there is, of course, no guarantee that the accord is linked to Soviet good behavior in other areas, just as defeating the accord should not be seen as a means of punishing Moscow. What seems indisputable, however, is that there would be enormous diplomatic fallout if the Senate rejects the treaty. U.S. ties with Moscow would suffer severely and there would be little chance, at least for a time, for superpower cooperation in other areas. With Brezhnev ailing and the Kremlin on the brink of changing leaders, it seems an especially poor time to chill U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations.

SALT's opponents inside the Senate are not as well organized as the backers, but have begun to mobilize. Tennessee's Baker could become the natural leader of the



John Glenn, Democrat of Ohio
I hope the President will not sign the agreement unless it is verifiable. If they go ahead and sign it and we still have doubts on verification, it is going to be very difficult to pass.

antitreaty forces if he decides to oppose the accord actively. Outspoken critics, such as Jackson, Goldwater and Utah Republican Jake Garn will be strongly backed by a number of militant right-wing organizations.

These groups have for months been readying newspaper ads, films and speakers to fight the treaty. The American Conservative Union will kick off its anti-SALT drive with a mass rally in Washington next month, to be followed by a grass roots postcard and phone call campaign. The A.C.U. has also put together a "truth



Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina
Countless things disturb me. It's very clear that the Russians have taken us to the cleaners. If this is the best the Administration can do, I suggest a SALT-free diet.

squad" of experts to refute the arguments of those Administration aides who will be promoting the accord.

Another conservative group, the American Security Council, has formed the Coalition for Peace Through Strength to serve as an umbrella for 166 separate antitreaty organizations. The coalition so far has recruited 194 Congressmen (mostly members of the House) and plans to set up 200 local chapters across the country. The first opened in Houston earlier this year. At American Security Council headquarters in Boston, Va., there is a bustle of new optimism. Said A.S.C. President John Fisher: "A few months ago, people were negative about the chances of defeating SALT. These same people are now ebullient about winning. There is a joy of battle."

One thing encouraging the treaty's critics is their feeling that the public has grown concerned because of signs that Moscow's goal may well be strategic superiority. Since the 1972 signing of SALT I, the Soviets have deployed four new types of ICBM, at least one new submarine-launched missile and the Backfire bomber. Another ICBM submarine-launched missile and supersonic bomber are both under development.

The U.S., by contrast, has only modestly upgraded its weaponry. It has fin-

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Special Report

ished outfitting the Minuteman III with multiwarhead MIRVs, and tested and canceled the B-1 supersonic bomber. Under development are an air-launched cruise missile, the Trident I and II submarine-launched missiles and the MX ICBM. Carter has admitted that he is worried by the Kremlin's military buildup. Said he last month: "What causes us concern is not the current balance, but the momentum of the Soviet strategic buildup ... At some future point, the Soviet Union could achieve a strategic advantage—unless we alter these trends."

The trouble with SALT II, say its opponents, is that it does not reverse these trends and thus benefits the U.S.S.R. Warned Paul Nitze, once a member of the U.S. SALT negotiating team and now perhaps the treaty's most authoritative critic: "It isn't an equal treaty. Soviet programs are much more elaborate than ours at this stage and during the period of the accord. The Soviets thus are going to end up either equal or ahead of us in every measure of strategic strength."

SALT critics are especially dismayed by the Administration's failure to get Moscow to accept a reduction in the number of its huge SS-18s. By the early to mid-1980s, these Soviet missiles could all be MIRVed and their accuracy improved. Then the Soviets might be able to launch only a small fraction of their ICBMs to destroy as much as 90% of the U.S. Minuteman ICBMs inside their thick concrete silos. This advantage could be politically exploited by the Kremlin. Stated Frank Barnett, president of the hawkish National Strategy Information Center: "In some not too distant crisis, both U.S. will and the morale of our allies can be enervated by the Soviet Union's nuclear preponderance. Strategic imbalance creates a vector for the levers of diplomacy."

Even Secretary Brown concurs with part of this gloomy assessment. He said in a Manhattan speech last month: "If the Soviets ever were to achieve superi-



Alan Cranston, Democrat of California *I'm pro the concept of SALT. It's a step toward restraint of nuclear war and ultimately less cost. I want to make sure it is a step away from the dangers of nuclear war.*

ority, I am convinced they would make every effort to exploit it politically and even militarily." Brown stressed, however, that he was convinced that "by any reasonable standard, we have a credible deterrent today and will have one for the foreseeable future ... even after an all-out surprise attack."

Verification is another issue raised by SALT's opponents, even though Carter and other top Administration officials insist that the U.S. will be able to check on Soviet compliance with the treaty. Critics continue to be worried about the loss of two U.S. intelligence bases in Iran, which electronically monitored Soviet missile tests. They argue that satellite surveillance cannot check on such crucial provisions of the treaty as the number of MIRVs the Soviets are actually placing on each ICBM and whether the Soviets are secretly stockpiling more missiles than allowed by the treaty's various ceilings. But Carter has stated: "We are confident that no significant violation of the treaty could take place without the U.S. detecting it."

The protocol section of SALT II is also under attack. Although its ban—on the flight testing of mobile ICBMs and on the deployment of land-and-sea-launched cruise missiles exceeding a range of 373 miles—expires at the end of 1981, SALT's opponents fear that these restrictions might become self-perpetuating. According to this argument, if a new round of arms talks is at a critical stage when the protocol lapses, Washington might decide that the SALT III process would be undermined unless the U.S. voluntarily continues to abide by the protocol's terms.

Though Western European countries are for SALT, U.S. ties with Britain and West Germany would almost certainly be strained by such an extension of the protocol. Reason: Washington would be prevented from cooperating with its allies in developing the long-range land and sea-launched cruise missiles on which London and Bonn have been counting.

Rather than categorically rejecting SALT II, a number of critics have indicated that they would okay the pact if some of its provisions were changed. Senator Jackson told TIME: "What you will witness is a real effort by the Senate to improve the treaty through amendments and plugging loopholes. The Senate will take seriously its constitutional mandate not only to consent, but to advise as well."

Officially, White House staffers have been warning Senators that the treaty must pass without amendments because changing the document could force a re-opening of negotiations with Moscow. If that happens, the entire agreement could unravel. Informally, however, Administration aides concede that they may have to accept some modifications, while Soviet officials privately hint that they may be willing to agree to some amendments that serve a symbolic purpose but do not change the terms of the accord.

Both sides, pro and con, raise valid points in the SALT debate. What seems indisputable is that despite the arduous negotiations, the treaty is a rather modest arms control accomplishment. At best, it



Mark Hatfield, Republican of Oregon *What we have is an illusion, an arms redirection rather than a limitation. Real weapons systems are exempted. I'd urge leapfrogging SALT II and going on to SALT III.*

is a step toward what might be achieved in SALT III. But at the same time the treaty is a political instrument of consequence. Senate defeat of it could damage the world's perception of the U.S. Warned Carter last week: "We would be looked upon as a warmonger, not as a peace-loving nation." Sums up Gerard Smith, the chief U.S. negotiator during SALT I and now an ambassador-at-large: "Perhaps the most serious loss that the SALT rejection would entail would be the conclusion by our friends and antagonists abroad that the U.S. Government was incapable of conducting a coherent foreign policy. If the product of six years of negotiations is thought to naught, what would be the chances for success in other negotiations?"



Sam Nunn, Democrat of Georgia *I am not ready to decide. Is the agreement equitable? Does it contribute to stability or crisis? Does it reduce the urge on both sides for a first strike? Finally, verification.*